

PEACE NEWS

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PACIFISM AND POWER

by

J. H. Watson

THE common weakness of man is a reluctance to accept responsibility. Englishmen have so long and so often held the view that they were more ready to shoulder social burdens than were other nationalities, but in practice, there isn't a fearful rush to be a member of a committee, council, or political body, though many of us fancy ourselves at the head of affairs.

To come to the substance of politics, the fiction of a class war hides the grim fact that those few who do possess the itch for accepting political responsibility are divided more or less evenly between those in power and those out. One gets round the little committee meetings to speak, and is horrified at the display of thirst for power, sadly enough, for the sake of power. And in the scramble for power social responsibility ceases to be disciplinary. No doubt these misguided individuals are honest as far as they go, and the thing which sustains them is largely the indifference of the masses; but real power evades them, an imaginative understanding of the elementary needs is beyond them, while major issues simply baffle them.

This may seem a sweeping criticism. Would that it were otherwise. There is no doubt in the mind of the writer that it is justified by his experience, and that the real nigger in the wood-pile is the mass who stand outside the conflict.

A Painful Business

The present war is only one happening which tends to awaken people to the need for a higher degree of political consciousness. We can see plainly how events crowd in on us as a result of past neglect.

Unfortunately, it is a painful business to open the eyes after long accustomed darkness, and the first instinct is to plunge into the job at hand

without realizing the corrupting effect of sudden glare, or the disillusionment of activity inside party politics. Thus it is that instead of creative activity we get fumbling on important issues, and the details of organization begin to carry us into that state wherein we cease to think, often when we most need all our faculties.

First Step Toward Peace?

It is readily conceded that the pacifist is no more obliged to undertake political activity than any other man. We may admit the need for purified politicians without ourselves being called upon to be such.

But surely in these times it must be the ardent conviction of pacifists that power in the hands of selfish and unimaginative persons is regrettable, if not disastrous; therefore, an undertaking of power by persons unselfish and imaginative is the first step toward peace. Wherever there is oppression, power is with the oppressors. And if we are ever to witness a world free from oppression, power must be with the liberators.

Now that we are feeling the weight of the political machine, it is obvious how fearful mechanized humanity can become. It may be that this is an evil we must not resist, nor yet evade. And hocus-pocus about being the yeast to ferment the mass, without accepting the penalties of such insidious activity, gets us nowhere; for once a minority assumes real power bang goes the bread, let alone the yeast.

Yet the faith of pacifists demands of us just this. We must become the in-

A PACIFIST COMMENTARY

Is the Government Lifting the Veil?

WERE this a war in which it was worth while to consider the tone and timbre of politicians' utterances, I should say that Mr. Churchill's recent speech showed a marked change in temper. Less of the Harry of Monmouth touch; a perceptible trace of concern for the dark and uncertain future. As though hitherto he had been able to think of nothing but securing these islands against invasion; but there had been a pause—time to reflect that to save these islands from invasion does not take us very far on the road to victory.

REAL SELF-DENIAL

A MEMBER of the Fellowship of Reconciliation sends 5s., "saved by foregoing my lunch for a week, and I gladly give it for the work you are doing." This is typical of the generosity and devotion of our readers.

In the last week we have received £44 12s. 4½d., making the total £628 18s. 6½d. Please help us to get back to the £50-a-week mark!

spiration for peace. Without assuming power we must become powerful. There are degrees of power, but no barriers. Nothing on earth can prevent the man of power from exercising power, in whatever sphere he is called upon to display it. How then can we become powerful?

The Greatest Lack

God forbid that one should minimize the disastrous effect of poverty. In the last war COs went to jail. It is ironic that the punishment in this war should be a thrust back on to one's pathetic resources.

The land looms large as the sole refuge from persecution and hunger, and we were unprepared, without training, money, or land. But the greatest and most important lack was the new humility we had to impose upon ourselves. One has little patience with those who see in pacifist land schemes nothing but a temporary refuge. The real test of our faith is coming after the war, for then we will have to move from the negative to the positive and in the process may find ourselves utterly dependent upon the land. But the strength of the movement can be recruited from the land.

It is not the labour alone which brings health. Nor yet the pure air. Not even the blessed sun itself will sustain us. But the living in a live world, a world wherein the very microbes keep alive the soil — in contrast to the dead world most of us are too terribly familiar with and loath to leave. As in all living contact, we exercise the old egotism at our peril. It was inflated egotism which brought the fall from real power, hungry as we were for the substitute.

Down to Earth

Now we wish for power — indeed, have the urge for it, in a time when the need is urgent. Let us at all costs begin to get down to earth, and see it as the only place for roots to hold.

In spite of winter, or because of it let us see the war period as a time for committing ourselves to a temporary loss of flower, that the peace may find us ready for prodigal growth. As the sap runs down, let us submit to the great cleanser, for even a swede enriches its flavour by accepting the frost, the root action passing it back to earth again. Without roots we are nothing but an impressive looking turnip. Certainly, unless we submit to the power outside ourselves, we will be devoured by the power of the false self.

No man is self-contained. We are independent of independence. If only men could see it that way, and grasp the power at hand instead of nursing the pretence. For pacifists, at least, the necessity is upon them to become powerful, that their faith may work wonders; though we must see the wonders as plain deeds.

Edited by "Observer"

There was even a passage which suggested that Mr. Churchill had had time to think better of his former promise that Britain would take the offensive in 1941.

But however Mr. Churchill's mind may be adapting itself to the military reality (which is far more serious than his speech conveyed) it cannot adjust itself to the social one. "All classes," he said, "have suffered evenly, as they would desire to do", under the intensive air-bombardment.

This is not true, and it is not possible. The residents of Berkeley Square are not made homeless; the inhabitants of Stepney are.

British Shipping Losses

SOME home truths are pretty freely spoken in the responsible press.

The naval correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* writes:—

Our merchant shipping position in recent weeks has steadily worsened until it reached a climax in the week ended September 22 with a loss of 27 ships of 159,288 tons. British shipping losses in eight consecutive weeks have totalled 502,608 tons, and it is clear that continuance of enemy pressure at the same rate must take our annual loss beyond 5 million tons, apart from losses among allied and neutral shipping in our service.

Mr. Hugh Quigley in *The Fortnightly Review* drives home the same formidable point:—

Instead of Germany being blockaded and deprived of the resources necessary for the successful prosecution of the war, it is Britain which is threatened with blockade, and the paucity of resources directly and easily available is becoming more and more apparent.

The Mediterranean Position

FURTHERMORE, Mr. Churchill's explanation of the Dakar fiasco, with its easy "disciplinary action has been taken," suggested that our Navy could, and ought to, have intercepted the French warships before they reached Gibraltar. I believe that this is untrue to the situation and unfair to the Navy, which is expected to live up

(Continued on next page)

Blockade Threatens French Children With Death

The Times published the following, on Monday, from its Special Correspondent on the "French Frontier" (dated Sunday). We quote it fully without comment.

PROFESSOR Macheboeuf (Rockefeller Fellow and Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Bordeaux) and Professor Chevalier at Marseilles, who are scientific advisers to the Vichy Ministry of Agriculture and Food, have warned Marshal Pétain in a report that, unless vitamin "A," in the form of cod liver oil or halibut oil, can be brought from America before January, three quarters of all the children of France will be in danger of death from malnutrition or from enhanced sensitivity to infectious diseases.

The critical time, they say, will be March, when the children's resistance will be at its lowest and the French food reserves nearest to exhaustion. The British blockade, they say, has resulted in the seizure of the French cod-fishing fleet off Newfoundland.

The report confirms the surveys of American Quakers and American Red Cross experts.

NO WAY OUT?

IN a recent number of *Time and Tide* Miss Rose Macaulay gave a vivid and painful description of the human destruction wrought by a bomb in London. She insisted, very rightly, that we should not cant about "women and children"; it was no worse that women should be killed than men. (Though children, she admits—and so do we—are somehow, mysteriously, a different matter, wherein "our feelings outrun reason": not violate, but outrun it.)

She goes on:—

It is all part of the blind, maniac, primitive, stupid bestiality of war, into which human beings periodically leap, spitting in civilization's face and putting her to confused rout. The alternative, here and now? No one can see, except surrendering to the still more blind, maniac, primitive, stupid bestiality of Nazi rule over Europe which would be to spit at and rout civilization even more earnestly. . . . A disgusting dilemma and one which agonizes many pacifists. Yet oddly enough some intelligent pacifists do not seem to feel the dilemma. They say that the Nazi "new order in Europe" would have good points.

We do not know of any intelligent pacifists who do not feel the dilemma. True, they do not feel it with the old agony, for they faced it four, five or six years ago. What intelligent person who signed the Peace Pledge in 1937 did not realize that he was pledging himself not to resist Nazism by war? If some intelligent people did not realize this, then we will say their deficiency was not in intelligence but in imagination.

To speak personally, we signed the Peace Pledge with the utmost reluctance. We had listened to Hitler's broadcast after the blood-bath of June, 1934; and our reaction had been immediate and uncontrollable. This thing is an abomination; the only thing to do is to fight it—if need be, to go down fighting it. It was only after three years' more inward struggle, three years' more bitter realization that the

democracies were not and never would be willing to fight for democracy, but only for their own national skins—only after this, without any exaltation, but rather a strange sinking of heart, did we sign the pledge "to renounce war." We had taken a sickening plunge—into the unknown. God alone knew where it would lead us. God alone knows even today.

But the dilemma which Miss Macaulay finds so agonising (as indeed it is) had to be resolved before we could sign the Pledge. The Peace Pledge movement was born not when Nazism was unknown, but after Nazism was established. Indeed, it was because Nazism threatened Europe with war that the PPU was founded. It was—in our mind and our experience—"beyond Nazism" when it began. Possibly this mind and this experience were not typical of the PPU. Indeed, they could not have been; or so many of its champions would not have fallen away.

But to some of us, at least, the signing of the Peace Pledge meant precisely that we had, in full consciousness, decided that it was better that Britons should refuse to resist, by any other weapons than their own faith and faithfulness, the new and monstrous tyranny of Nazism. It was an act of faith: for ourselves personally an act of faith born of despair. There was no other way to go, except along the unknown road. To go along the known road was deliberately to endorse the evil that we knew to be evil. A man, once he is sure that the known way is evil, cannot go along it and live.

The miseries of the world are miseries; the horrors of Nazism are horrors. The fact that Nazism, on the plane of world-history, is probably the destined instrument of European unification, just as

(Continued on back page)

COMMENTARY

Continued from page 1.

to a chimerical British control of the Mediterranean.

The truth, as the naval correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* points out, is that the British Navy does not command the Mediterranean. Indeed, that is obvious. If it did, Marshal Graziani's invading army would not maintain itself at all. Plainly the enormous supplies required by the Italian army in Egypt are reaching them across the Mediterranean without interruption.

The *Guardian* correspondent explains precisely how. "The Italian air-force has neutralized Malta as a naval base." Consequently, if their air-reconnaissance from the Dodecanese reports the British fleet in harbour at Alexandria, "the Italians know that there can be no attack in force against the convoy route in less than 56 hours at 16 knots. Since the Italian convoys have a sea-passage from the southern ports to Tripoli of about 40 hours at 8 knots, they have the best part of a day to spare in moving their supply-ships from Taranto to Tripoli."

These are home-truths of such a kind that the fact of their publication is itself remarkable. It suggests that the Government is not averse from allowing some idea of the tremendous gravity of the situation to percolate to the public. But that is not enough. A national Government has a responsibility for positively instructing the nation.

What are Reprisals?

MR. CHURCHILL dissipated something of the aura of moral illusion which has been gathering round reprisals. He has not left us much chance to assume a virtue though we have it not.

What are reprisals? What we are doing now is to batter continuously each of those points in Germany the destruction of which we believe will do the Germans most injury and will most speedily lessen their power to strike at us. Is that a reprisal? It seems to me very like one. At any rate it is all we have time for now.

In fact, the traditional conception of a reprisal, as something morally reprehensible, is irrelevant to total war. It can have validity only in the few provinces of modern war where the "totality" has not yet penetrated—for example, in the treatment of prisoners of war. By some curious atavism, they are not killed on being captured. If the Germans began to kill their prisoners, it would be a reprisal if we began to kill ours.

Impossible Distinctions

THE *Christian News-Letter* maintains that the vital difference between legitimate and illegitimate warfare emerges when "there is deliberate attack on the unarmed and the innocent for the purpose of creating terror."

But who is to prove that the attack was deliberate? And how are the unarmed-innocent to be segregated? Men and women engaged in munitions work, export-manufacture, air-raid precautions are unarmed, but they certainly are not "innocent". Women and children who happen to be at a railway-station when it is bombed may be "innocent," but they are involved in a military objective. Any part of the transport or industrial system is such an objective.

"Christians can take part in war," says the *News-Letter*, "only if the distinction can be maintained between war and murder." We say it cannot be maintained in modern warfare. "If war degenerates into wilful slaughter of the innocent," it says further, "Christians must either become pacifists or give up their religion." That sounds hopeful. But if we reflect that the only people who can clearly be placed in the category of the innocent are the children, and that trying to starve them does not count as trying to murder them, the chance of Christians being summoned to be pacifists or give up their religion by the *News-Letter* is slender after all.

Freedom of Opinion

THE *TIMES* correspondent asked Mr. Gandhi: "Do you feel that the free expression of opinion may legitimately take the form of dissuading men from being recruited as soldiers . . . and of encouraging people generally to give no direct or indirect support to the war-effort?" Mr. Gandhi replied: "If the question is put in this form I have to answer in the affirmative, but I have no such personal appeal

The Case For "CONDITIONAL PACIFISM"

IT recently seems to have become a fashion among erstwhile leaders of pacifist thought to abjure their former faith with the cry, "If only it hadn't been for Hitler". Thus Mr. Milne publishes a reply to his earlier book, *Peace with Honour* entitled *War with Honour*, and Mr. Joad writes in *The Listener* on "A Pacifist's Conversion". And indeed there is a certain element of truth in what they say, though it sounds strange coming from such lips.

by

DENNIS DOBSON

yet peace, and now that war has come they have climbed on to the band-wagon, as some of us, perhaps uncharitably, suspected they might, and are shouting their war slogans with the best.

In Certain Circumstances

On the other hand, many of us have never committed ourselves to absolute pacifism, although we realized that it was the ideal position and the correct one in certain circumstances with which I shall deal below, and we have always deeply respected those, like Mr. Gandhi, whose faith in the possibility of those circumstances arising was greater than ours, and who are now, at the testing time, standing firm in their beliefs.

It is just because I subscribe to the four affirmations that I believe there are times when the taking up of arms is the best way of fulfilling the fourth; we are agreed that our task is to take the most creative and constructive action in the face of existing circumstances. This position seems to me to be the nearest approach to the absolute pacifist ideal which is practicable in the present state of the world.

This is not to say that the establishment of the new world order, where possible, by non-violent methods is not a far greater achievement than its establishment by force. The struggle of the Indian people for their freedom has been a far nobler one by reason of its emphasis on the power of non-violence and, when they have attained it, it will have a far greater spiritual purity than if it had been gained entirely by force. But this has only been possible because the masses have been prepared to follow the leadership of a very great saint like Mr. Gandhi.

Tool of Reaction

On the other hand, in Spain there was no such spiritual discipline among the masses; no such saintly leader as Mr. Gandhi who could have inculcated the spirit of non-violence in the masses and even abolished the army, soon to become a breeding ground of reaction and opposition to the Republic; and so, when the fascist rebellion broke out, the Spanish people had to resist it by force. And if anyone says that they failed, it was almost entirely because we and the other democracies failed to send them the necessary arms.

We allowed Mr. Chamberlain's policy of not burning our fingers in Spain to prevail; we allowed our pacifism to be made the tool of reaction, and now we are reaping in this war the fruits of our misjudgment. We failed to carry out the fourth affirmation; we failed to realize that in the existing circumstances the most creative and constructive action we could take was to ensure the victory of those forces in whose triumph alone would the possibility of a peaceful world exist.

Not Spiritually Prepared

Nevertheless I would completely differ from Messrs. Joad and Milne in that I still think that you cannot destroy Hitlerism by an international war such as has so far been waged, even though such methods may be necessary to resist the main force of the German advance and to prepare the ground for the German people themselves to destroy for ever the Nazi tyranny.

As Alexander Miller said in *Peace News* for August 2, "You cannot exorcise by crude force a gigantic evil which, like Hitlerism, is the supreme expression of the evil principle in society itself. Such an evil can be overcome only by a powerful and contrasting good; and war, which is visibly meeting force with force, increasingly matching hate with hate, is too much like an imitation of Hitlerism to be

effective in destroying it". But in the next issue "Observer" remarks in "A Pacifist Commentary" that, while he himself is "in favour of making peace now — 'capitulating' as most people would call it", he realizes "that the overwhelming majority of Britons are not spiritually prepared for such an act of religious surrender."

In such circumstances what is the pacifist to do? Clearly if his pacifism is based purely upon the principle of utility, as was Mr. Joad's, or is mere emotional humanism, as that of Mr. Milne, he will find that the war with which he has ultimately been faced is one which, by virtue of its difference from the last, it is possible for him to support.

Brothers by Baptism

If, on the other hand, his approach is as a Christian, his pacifism will be based, unless it is merely a vague Christian humanism with which I shall not deal, on his conception of the Ecclesia as an international society transcending national frontiers.

He will regard baptized Christians in other countries as his brothers and as members of one great family, the Church, to whom he owes a greater loyalty as fellow Christians than to other Englishmen outside the Church merely regarded as such. It will therefore be apparent that if Christians in all lands realized the implications of their being baptized members of the Ecclesia and refused to fight, the war would be immediately over.

But the Christians who do realize these implications at present are few, as are also the internationally-minded non-Christians. What are we, who as Christians believe in the Ecclesia or as non-Christians in the brotherhood of man, to do until such time as we are in the majority? Are we to become absolute pacifists and hope that by our precept others will be encouraged to join us? Certainly, if there seems any chance for a mass move in that direction; but at present I personally do not think so; though I honour and would stand by those who do.

Rather do I think that we must join up with those other progressive forces which are striving after a new world order from which war will have been abolished together with its root causes — imperialism, monopoly capitalism, and sovereign States. We must learn to distinguish when the taking up of arms will further this end and when it will retard it.

"Progressive" Wars

As Lenin said "Socialists have always condemned wars between peoples as barbarous and bestial . . . (but) there have been many wars in history which, notwithstanding all the horrors, cruelties, miseries, and tortures, inevitably connected with every war, had a progressive character, i.e., they served the development of mankind, aiding in the destruction of extremely pernicious and reactionary institutions (as, for instance, absolutism or serfdom), or helping to remove the most barbarous despotisms in Europe (that of Turkey or Russia)."

And again: "The social and political character of the war is determined not by the 'good intentions' of individuals or groups, or even of peoples, but by the position of the class which conducts the war, by the class policy of which the war is a continuation, by the ties of capital, which is the dominant economic force in modern society, by the imperialist character of international capital."

We must learn to distinguish in this light when war is justified.

Finally, I come to the reason for which I have written this article. Although we accept the four affirmations, because we cannot take the pledge for the reasons given above, those of us whose position is that of Conditional Pacifism are unable to be connected with the work of the PPU. Would it not be possible for a new class of associate membership to be created for us so that we can be in some way associated with our fellow-pacifists?

to individuals in view. If Congress is honest and earnest, Congress must make a general appeal which would involve soldiers and contributors to the war-funds and war-loans."

It is reminiscent of the Peace Pledge Union poster trial. Mr. Gandhi would approve of the issue and exhibition of such a poster in India. But the circumstances are vitally different. India was not consulted as to her willingness to enter the war, whereas Britain's entry was the free decision of her Parliament. Mr. Gandhi is defending the elementary principles of democracy. The PPU was not in that strong position.

We should have to imagine the House of Commons gone pacifist—almost to a man—against a Government bent on carrying on the war, to get a true analogy.

Fascism in U.S.A.

SOME correspondence from Chicago illuminates the obscure connection between isolationism and the Republican Party. My Republican friend assures me that he has talked to 27 Democrats who voted for Roosevelt in 1936, and 25 have said that they intend to vote for Willkie.

His, and their, argument is simple: it is that Roosevelt means fascism. He has created a vast political machine composed of job-holders and those receiving relief. A third term—and military conscription—will enable him further to consolidate this political machine. Hence a permanent one-party system will be created. And that is fascism, or what the Republicans now choose to call by that name.

The fallacies in the argument do not need underlining. All it really means (I fear) is that the Republicans prefer to be the one party. They want to keep out of the war so long as Roosevelt is in control. Their objections would vanish if Willkie were in. But that does not mean it is not a good election platform.

Pernicious Intolerance

A peculiarly pernicious letter by Lord Elton is given prominence in *The Times* of Oct. 12. He advocates refusing to allow the CO exempted by the tribunal to continue his university course and so gain seniority in the teaching profession over his serving contemporaries. That is at least arguable; but this is not:

There is a further danger in this practice. One of the most tragic consequences of the last war was that since the first years of it were fought without conscription most of the young men who should have been leaders of their generation fell. Those who for conscientious or other reasons evaded the posts of danger survived out of all due proportion to set the standards of the post-war generation. Hence many of the moral and intellectual disorders of the last 20 years. As coming from Lord Elton this is intolerable. Lord Elton was given his peerage in 1931 for his support of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald; Mr. Clifford Allen was his fellow-baron. Lord Elton, in fact, is Lord Elton precisely because of his association with the most prominent pacifists of the last war.

Letters to the Editor

WORSE THAN WAR?

WHEN the ferocity of war, as they are experiencing it, begins to make pacifists doubt their faith, it might be said paradoxically that their faith is being demonstrated. Force is not bringing peace.

Pacifists, however, do well to test their own faith. After forty years, the writer sees it as an absolute revolt against modern war. The observing and thinking pacifist knows that war did not begin with Hitler. The enemy was the Bourbons; it was the Corsican Ogre; it was Czar Nicholas and "the savage Muscovite"; it was Kruger; it was Prussian Militarism; and now it is Nazism. And next time there will be another enemy also barbaric, also an exceptional reason for war. Meanwhile war has spread from professional to national armies, and from armies to whole populations. Now it takes possession of hundreds of millions of minds and hearts during almost every hour of every day and night. It is a man-made Moloch.

The pacifist revolt against all this is not merely political, nor is it simply rationalist. His intuitions, his reason, his emotions—his whole being repudiates each and every surrender to war. Theoretically he may or may not abjure all physical force. He may reserve a liberty to believe in the police force of some remote world commonwealth. What he has to face for his lifetime is that set of conditions under which the men of two nations will cheer each other in a sports stadium in one month, and in the next will be starting a course of mutual destruction extending to everything they love and would naturally preserve. This is modern war. To the pacifist it is intolerable. If he knows himself at all, this fact he knows and feels in his heart. Let the argument for this or that war be what it may. The recoil of the pacifist is from this war and the next and the next. It is from the idea and spirit of war. There must be another way.

What is there to set against this truth within? Political religion—the modern faith in the nation, the State the political system; and political opinion—the sort of opinion which is always so sure of itself, and is always so much in need of amendment by history. On the highest political authority we have just been told that "the right to guide the course of world history is the noblest prize of victory." Whose was the prize in 1918? Who guided history, and to what?

Against political religion the pacifist has one which is universal and of the ages. And against the political myths he has something limited to himself, perhaps, but sure. Whether or not he has the strength to enter the new future to which it calls, at least he cannot turn back.

P. REDFERN

Marple Bridge, Cheshire.

Worse Than London?

Apropos the pacifist's thoughtful negative reply to the question "Is Nazism Worse Than War?" in your issue of October 4, and Miss Rose Macaulay's somewhat heated positive reply to the same question, in an article in *Time and Tide* of October 5, [see leading article, "No Way Out?" page 1 of this issue], I would like to draw your attention to the following frank and illuminating report of reasonable conditions prevailing among the people of one country that, fulfilling the pacifist idea, surrendered rather than fight (which they might have done, even as in Finland), namely, Denmark, taken from no less a paper than the *Daily Telegraph* (Sep. 27):

From Our Own Correspondent

STOCKHOLM, Thursday.

King Christian of Denmark today celebrated his 70th birthday, and the event, in spite of the German occupation, was celebrated as a national festival unparalleled in Danish history. The King is beloved by his people more than ever on account of his dignified attitude under the German occupation.

The feast began at seven o'clock in the morning, and the whole broadcasting programme was focused on the birthday as a sign that Denmark is more than ever united as a nation around its Sovereign. The King at first wanted the day to pass privately, but the people's love and craving for a national demonstration became so plain that he gave in. During the day the King and Queen drove in an open motor-car through Copenhagen, where the streets were lined with the

PEOPLE are realizing that "conchies" are not "shirkers" after all. That is one of the important points made in this article (the first of two on service in London) by

CHARLES DIMONT

Pacifism in ACTION

PACIFISM means something in London today. In almost every part of the devastated areas you will find pacifists giving humanitarian service.

In the past six weeks I have had many opportunities of seeing them at work. Much of what they are doing is neither spectacular nor exciting, but it is a service most urgently needed among the civilian population.

The work varies from bicycle first aid parties carried out by the Pacifist Service Units to the staffing and managing of emergency feeding centres, clothes depots, shelter marshalling, cleaning out shelters, assisting in billeting and evacuation, moving furniture from bombed houses, and fire fighting where this service is not covered by the official organizations.

Anyone who comes to give service in London should be prepared to do anything from cutting bread to putting out an incendiary bomb.

PERHAPS one of the most important conclusions that emerges from it all is the new view of pacifism now to be found among the non-pacifist public.

I was talking recently to a man who, with his family, had been cared for in an emergency feeding centre in the East End run by pacifists. He told me that until lately he had never approved of "conchies" and had considered them "shirkers," but in the last few weeks had quite altered his opinion.

"The way in which these fellows go out at night regardless of bombs and shrapnel and without even the protection of a tin hat, makes them more — heroes than cowards. We won't have any more of that sort of talk around here."

SOME of the work being undertaken by pacifists is as yet uncovered by the authorities.

A good example of this is the Pacifist Sanitary Squad which operates in one of the most crowded areas near the docks. Every morning this squad goes round a number of large public shelters and thoroughly cleans them. Only those who have actually seen a shelter after use can have any idea of the foul conditions that have to be dealt with.

Although now most boroughs are starting some sort of shelter cleaning organization, I believe that this pacifist squad was the first to start on such work. The chief of civil defences for this borough has himself shown great interest in the work and expressed his appreciation of it.

ANOTHER unique piece of work is being done by a group of pacifists who can only give part of their time to it, as they are all in jobs. They go round in their own borough taking out the Anderson shelters from bombed premises and disused houses and then hand them over to the local authorities for use where they may be most needed.

But I suppose the bulk of the pacifist work and the job in which people are most interested is that directly connected with the victims of this devastating and senseless war. I have seen

population along a route eight miles long, which included the poorest quarters.

But the culmination was when the King received his people in the person of 20 representatives of all classes, including the Prime Minister, the Minister for Ireland, a clergyman, a physician, a peasant, a fisherman, an artisan, a business man, an actor and a man of science.

The day ended with a performance at the Royal Theatre, concluding with the National Anthem. Tickets were given to all the authorities and leading men of Denmark. The rest were sold for £20 after people had been waiting for 40 hours, many sleeping in the open market-place in camp beds.

I, for one, would rather be a person in subject Denmark, under the conditions indicated, than a person limbless, homeless, and poor, as is alas! a mounting number, in London or Berlin. Who would not?

In the light of that single report alone, the negative answer to the question put is surely correct. The question itself is crucial.

G. H. MURPHY.

London, N.W.4.

refugees and devastation in many countries, but nowhere have I seen such pitiful sights as in London during the past weeks.

This is not to say that the morale of the people, especially the working class, is breaking; far from it, but it is taking time for them to recover from the suddenness of the shock of realizing that their own city and their own homes were not impregnable, and that what has happened across the world from China to the Pyrenees can happen and is happening here.

I believe that no pacifist would want to refrain from helping in the feeding and sheltering of these people.

In helping them to reorganize their lives out of the wreckage of their homes the pacifist is now making a very valuable contribution to society.

It is here, I think, that the shelters managed by pacifists differ from some of those directly run by the authorities. For example, in one large feeding centre the Pacifist Service Units started off by receiving over one hundred people. Immediately the leader of the group running this place set to work to organize a really communal life for them, and he himself has told me that, much to his own surprise, most of his "guests" took to the idea like a fish to water.

"We encourage them to do everything they can for themselves," he says, "to manage their own catering, clean their own quarters and generally make themselves as comfortable as possible, because we want them to feel that their home life can continue with us, if only for a short period."

Actually it has been so successful that although fresh billets have been found for most of these people, some of them do not want to leave.

(To be concluded)

Labour Party Pacifists

A regrettable typographical error made our report under the above heading on page 2 last week practically meaningless!

The first paragraph should have announced that as a result of the presentation to Mr. Attlee, last spring, of a petition from 1,600 Labour Party members urging a negotiated peace, those of the signatories who were pacifists formed the Labour Pacifist Fellowship, which is described as "an association of pacifist members of the Labour Party."

Readers will have gathered, however, that Labour Party pacifists were invited to communicate with either the general secretary, William C. Elliot, 36 Reigate Hill, Reigate, Surrey, or the London regional secretary, W. R. Page, 127, Fellows Road, N.W.3.

Friendship In Wartime

By JOHN BARCLAY

LIKE many others, I came out of the last war suffering from gas-poisoning and neurasthenia. They told me that I had come to the end of my endurance for the time being and any attempt to struggle against the exhaustion would end in the snap of the "tether" between mind and body.

There is a grave danger of that kind of neurosis under the present strain of living. In spite of the cheerful messages from gentlemen of the BBC, there is widespread unhappiness which cannot be touched by non-personal efforts. I have thought out a plan which might be undertaken by every Group in a reception area in co-operation with those in the bombed cities. Those Groups which are fortunate enough to possess a Dick Sheppard centre can do much more along the same lines.

The evacuation of people from the danger areas is increasing. Some are coming out under the control of authorities, a great many are evacuating themselves. In both cases it so often means that families are split up and become lonely units in a strange land. Letter-writing is not a strong point with many and this loneliness becomes one of the tragedies of war. My suggestion is that every Group in such an area should immediately set to work to get some of these people together and by becoming friends help them to write letters and get messages sent to our Groups in the home district from which these people come.

I am willing to act as agent for such relatives in London and will undertake to do what I can to deliver letters and messages and stimulate the building-up of personal contacts. These friendships could become real links binding us together and making it possible to open up fresh channels in the future toward other nations. Loneliness and fear of the unknown future can only be made bearable by friendship.

If this idea appeals to you, please write and let me know, and even if it does not, write and give me suggestions for active group work which you feel should be done now.

The West Kent Region is to lose the services of Eric Roach, who for a long time has been regional secretary. He will be joining an agricultural community in Cornwall in the near future. Eric Roach is a member of the National Council.

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Circulation Notes

Our Greatest Asset

By John W. Cowling

THESE are difficult days for all newspapers and periodicals. In our effort to overcome the obstacles of the present time, we lack the material resources and equipment available to the national press. Yet we possess something much more valuable — the active good will of our supporters. That is our greatest asset.

The recent progress of the Fighting Fund is one proof of that; the numerous instances of PPU groups having increased their orders steadily — sometimes three or four-fold — since June, are another, and the devotion of the small but growing band of those who still sell on the streets is a third.

Ultimately the extent to which we can regain our former circulation will depend upon whether we get that support from each individual PPU member. If we will, we can make Peace News a truly co-operative enterprise and an integral part of the movement.

Saying It in Verse

To those who ask "What can I do?" I would commend the following poem. Though written by a member of the Birmingham Peace News Committee, and addressed to group secretaries in Birmingham, it might well have been addressed by us — if only we were versatile enough! — to secretaries throughout the country:

Dear Secretary.—We thank you for all the
toll and care
You've shown in distributing Peace News
everywhere.
We know the work of making lists and organizing such
Efficient distribution—and we thank you very much.

But still we feel there must be some who're
very, very sad
Because they think that nowadays Peace
News just can't be had;
Perhaps they seldom meet the group, are never
in the town,
Are really in despair because the newsagent's
let them down.

And so we think your group members would
probably be glad
To call on these unfortunates and stop them
being sad;
Revive their hope, restore their faith, their
downcast air dispel,
And increase, too, the numbers of Peace
News that we sell.

Each member might approach one person in
his neighbourhood,
Where news that Peace News still exists
would probably do good.
We're sure you'll see your way to help us
increase circulation,
And offer grateful, humble thanks—now,
in anticipation!

I hope this letter tickles your fancy
as much as it did mine. May it also
stimulate a feeling of responsibility towards
our paper, for on that depends
its whole future.

NO WAY OUT?

Caesarism was the means of unifying the anarchy of the Greco-Roman world, does not diminish by one iota the horrors of Nazism. But neither do these horrors diminish by one iota our conviction that they cannot be eradicated by prolonging this war. They will only become the more deep-rooted and endemic. Think of the hatred and callousness that was generated after four years of the last war; think of the hatred and callousness that will be generated after four years of this. You cannot go on bombing and being bombed, blockading and being blockaded for years without some irremediable hardening of the soul.

At the best, after a struggle in which the extremity of brutality has been applied by either side, one will gain a precarious "victory." And the victor will forthwith be paralysed by fear. Does Hitler dream that he will ever reduce Englishmen or Frenchmen to willing servants of his will? Does Churchill dream that he will reduce Germans to the willing servants of his? The victor, in either case, will live in fear of a slave revolt. The underground terrorism of nationalist assassins and gunmen will begin.

Is there indeed no way out? Are the alternatives really war till collapse, or submissions to Nazism? We cannot

"NAZI METHODS" ON OBJECTORS

C.O.s Again Refuse Duties

ALTHOUGH all the conscientious objectors whose treatment in a unit of the non-combatant corps we described last week had to give in to appalling methods of "persuasion", eleven of them again refused, on October 9, to go on parade and declared that they could not carry out their military duties any more.

Reliable reports have reached Peace News that, in spite of the fact that a protest against brutal methods had already been made direct to the War Office, these men were dragged out on to the parade ground and "generally beaten up."

Eventually, however, a charge was preferred against them (of mutiny—the penalty for which, they were warned, was death—and insubordination), and they went before their commanding officer. They were then sent, under arrest, to a camp in South Wales to await their court martial.

We understand that a War Office inquiry is still proceeding.

More Council Decisions

A STRONG defence of the conscientious objector was put up by a Quaker councillor at last week's meeting of Somerset County Council.

Although the council had, at a previous meeting, decided without a division against dismissing COs, the Education Committee now reported that they had decided not to consider applications from COs for teaching positions during the war. Moving the reference back of that part of the report, Mr. Roger Clark submitted that any difference between refusing to employ COs and dismissing those already employed was one of degree rather than of kind.

To him the clear intention of the Chamberlain Government in the military service Act was to prevent the persecution of persons on account of convictions proved, before tribunals set up for the purpose, to be conscientiously held. This was just as much flouted by resolutions never to appoint as by the cruder form of persecution involved in dismissal.

An Unfounded Fear

The reason given in sub-committee for refusing to appoint, Mr. Clark went on, was the fear that the innocent minds of children would be perverted by propaganda in favour of the opinions of a teacher holding these views. That fear he regarded as entirely groundless, an absolute chimera. No one with a grain of common sense would risk his position by doing anything of the kind.

Mr. James Morland seconded the amendment.

Mr. Philip Thursfield, Chairman of the Education Committee, said the committee had to consider the opinions and feelings of parents on this question. The amendment was defeated by "a preponderance of voices."

At the end of this month registered

Continued from page 1.

say. At the level of immediate politics no pacifist sets up to be a prophet. Still, even at that level, a pacifist's mind may function. We can at least record our conviction that a compromise peace is possible, and that America's influence would be more powerful in such a peace than it would be even if she were to enter the war. It is also our opinion that the kind of war we are being compelled to wage can only consolidate the dominion of Nazism, and that peace—even in the bare sense of cessation of war—alone has power to humanize, that is, to weaken it.

In this realm a pacifist has opinions merely. His convictions belong to a different order. Roughly, they amount to this. Now that the nations have become monstrous mechanisms, there is no way of securing liberty for men by the act of nations any more. The only promise of hope lies in breaking through the mechanism to the man. We must break through the nation-mechanism, first in ourselves, then in company with others who have broken through. On that painful act of spiritual liberation we cannot go back. Not the nation but the man is now the reality for us: in him we must believe; him we must discover, and in him discover the image and likeness of God.

COs employed by Winchester City Council will take "leave of absence without pay for the duration of the war," in accordance with a recent decision of the council.

Any employee subsequently registering as a CO will thereby sign away his job "for the duration."

At a recent meeting of Peterborough Education Committee, it was decided to judge the case of each conscientious objector in their employ on its own merits, and when the matter was further debated by the City Council on September 27, it was then decided, with only one vote in opposition, to uphold the decisions of the local tribunal in the case of any of their employees.

International Law and Co-operation

The War for Peace. By Leonard Woolf, (Routledge, 7/6).

This book is a thoroughly honest piece of work, well worth reading, if only because it deals with human beings and not with the semi-fictional abstractions of most political and economic theorists. Its declared object is to draw "the broad outlines of an international system of law, co-operation and peace" based on human common-sense and experience, and to show that, although one such effort, the League of Nations, has failed, there is no reason for thinking it impossible to establish such a system after this war.

But Woolf admits that, in the light of his experience of the last 22 years and the practical certainty, when "peace" arrives, of a still more inflamed and vindictive atmosphere than in 1918-9, the chances of establishing a really stable system are not great; nevertheless, though "it is a conceivable procedure to go about unarmed and trust in God", it is better to take the chance and fight it out, with the slender hope of so preventing a third great war. The alternatives are barbarized and poverty-stricken groups of "sovereign" States living in an unhappy condition of perpetual war and preparation of war, or else "an international Government established in the form of slave-empires by dictators."

Such a prospect, and "Nazism" in general, Woolf regards as intolerable. But he keeps a cool head in war-time and attributes our present situation principally to the existing "international system", political, social, economic. "The Hitlers, Stalins, Laval, Chamberlains... being mere puppet-shadows projected on to the screen of history" by this and other potent causes.

There is, however, no indication in his argument that our disasters are largely the outcome of the amazing phenomenon of unrestricted machine-production. Most PPU readers would probably put down the book with the feeling that the hope for mankind lies, not in efforts without prospect of success to change the post-war policies of Governments, but in the patient pioneering work of individuals and groups who refuse to be organized into a national and economic system of which the final end must be the recurrence of inevitable and total war. S.H.

The principal contents of the October Adelphi The Adelphi Centre, Langham, Essex: 10jd. post free) are "Stop Bombing" by Max Plowman; "Which way are we going?" by John Middleton Murry; and "Draughty Views" by Jack Common. There is a beautiful poem by William Soutar, "The Children". Once more we warmly recommend The Adelphi to all our readers.

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DOMESTIC HELP: modern house (business); two in family. Woolard, 88/90 Winsover Rd., Spalding, Lincs.

PHILOSOPHER and Spiritual Healer requires young confidential secretary; references necessary, or would consider one who has recently done a full secretarial course; country district (South). Box 553, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Road, N.4.

SALESMAN with car, or cycle, for Uxbridge and District, Enfield and District, Harpenden (Herts), Welwyn Garden City and District; evening work essential; permanent; paid holidays; pension; previous sales experience essential. Write or phone for appointment. Cyril Corden, Cline Rd., N.11. ENTERPRISE 1520.

YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE farming in Devon wish to find pacifist man or woman to share work and profits and contribute capital. Box 562, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

SITUATIONS AND WORK WANTED

CHRISTIAN PACIFIST couple wish to hear from rural communities with room for new members; can pay keep for initial period. Box 557, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

C.O. Engineer's Turner, 20, awaiting appeal, requires job, preferably in own trade, but not essential, consider anything. Box 565, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Road, N.4.

C.O., 25, conditional exemption, requires forestry or land work; no experience, but willing; community preferred. Box 563, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

HEALTHY, active couple (man professional, unconditionally exempted) need work, agricultural and/or administrative; car available. Box 566, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

LONDON JOURNALIST (27) wants farming or land work; able and willing; wife help housework; no private means. Box 554, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

PACIFIST, Aged 36, Electrical and Mechanical Engineer, own substantial London business (Car Radio) closed by war ban, and capital assets thereby frozen or lost, unable to get occupation other than war work, seeks employment and/or co-operation with pacifist folk; many material assets on hand (at time of writing advert.); has started promising new business, but is unable properly to finance; educated, genuinely capable, highest credentials; replies urgently invited, will of course be treated in strictest confidence. Box 558, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

PACIFIST, CONDITIONAL EXEMPTION, requires work on land, or would invest small capital in community camp. Box 559, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

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ELDERLY WOMAN requires quarters in WARM place; gardening, bees; with pacifists preferred. Particulars, Dr. Hies, 40 Eardley Rd., Sevenoaks.

PACIFIST contemplates starting a community, either in North Wales or Cumberland; members required; agricultural experience helpful. Box 555, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Road, N.4.

PACIFIST COUPLE in comparatively safe area offer home to girl (7 years upward) from danger area, for duration. Box 556, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

PIANOFORTE LESSONS required from pacifist teacher; North London area essential; Sundays preferred. Box 560, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Rd., N.4.

QUAKERISM. Information and literature respecting the Faith and Practice of the Religious Society of Friends, free on application to the Friends' Home Service Committee, Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

TEACHER (50s), living alone, offers comfortable, quiet, temporary home to mother and daughter or two sisters from danger zone, return for duties of small modern house, neutral area, Midlands; small payment toward board, if able. Box 564, Peace News, 3 Blackstock Road, N.4.

THE PACIFIST SERVICE UNIT at the Dick Sheppard Memorial Club, Binney Street, London W.1, urgently requires a secondhand man's bicycle for first aid patrol work. Will any sympathiser present one?